

Academic Program Discontinuance Policy

Executive Sponsor: Office of the
Provost & Senior Vice President
for Academic Affairs

Responsible Office: Office of
the Provost & Senior Vice
President for Academic Affairs

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I. Policy Statement

This policy outlines the standards and procedures for the discontinuance of a credit-bearing academic program at The University of Scranton.

II. Reason for Policy

The University of Scranton is committed to maintaining a vibrant, high-quality, and relevant academic portfolio that aligns with its mission and goals.

This policy establishes a formal, transparent, and consultative process for the discontinuance of academic programs (majors, minors, or concentrations) to ensure that such decisions are made with due consideration for academic integrity, faculty governance, and student success. This policy ensures that any decision to sunset a program is evidence-based and includes a "teach-out" plan to protect the interests of currently enrolled students.

III. Scope

This policy applies to all credit-bearing academic programs offered by the College of Arts and Sciences, the Kania School of Management, and the Leahy College of Health Sciences. The University may discontinue an academic program. Consideration of faculty teaching in the program must be consistent with the provisions of the Faculty Handbook regarding faculty status (see especially Sections 26.3 & 26.4). Timely, careful, and meaningful consultation with faculty and academic administration is necessary at all stages of the process, as well as due consideration for the students in the program. While responsibility for curriculum at the University lies with the faculty, including its academic administrators, any discontinuance of an academic program must meet with the approval

of the Provost and, in the case of a major program, the President of the University and the Board of Trustees. The discontinuance of an academic program will follow detailed steps provided below which build a proposal that represents the judgements of the faculty, Program Director(s), Department Chair(s), Dean(s), and Provost. Ultimately, the initial proposal for discontinuance of an academic program will be accompanied by a department faculty majority response (Appendix A), a department faculty minority response, if applicable (Appendix B), Dean(s)' response(s) (Appendix C), and a Provost response (Appendix D). A discontinuance of an academic program proposal must be posted to the Faculty Senate Curriculum Bulletin Board by the published deadline (deadlines are posted to the Provost webpage) to be considered for the next curriculum catalog.

IV. Definitions

- **Program Discontinuance:** The formal termination of an academic degree program, major, minor, or certificate.
- **Teach-out Plan:** A written plan that provides for the equitable treatment of students if an institution, or an institutional location that provides 100% of at least one program, ceases to operate before all students have completed their program of study.

V. Procedures

A. Identification of Programs to be Considered for Discontinuance

1. A proposal to discontinue a program may originate at the level of faculty, department, Director, Dean, or Provost and will involve input at all levels. Each aforementioned level will contribute to a complete proposal submitted to the Faculty Senate for consideration (outlined below). Faculty, Department Chairpersons, Program Director(s), or interdisciplinary Interdepartmental Program Directors may notify the appropriate Dean(s) about an interest in discontinuing a program. Likewise, the Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs may structure a discussion for a cross-college study of academic programs that are potential discontinuance candidates.

B. Relevant Identifying Criteria

1. In order to maintain an open and supportive environment for program discontinuance discussions, discontinuance-eligible academic programs must be identified in a systematic and uniformly applied process. The below are some examples of criteria that may be used to support the discontinuance of an academic program:

- a. Enrollment Based Criteria:
 - i. Inquiries to the program and trends (most recent year, 2-year average, 5-year average);
 - ii. Applications to the program (most recent year, 2-year average, 5-year average);
 - iii. Admissions to the program (most recent year, 2-year average, 5-year average);
 - iv. Graduation from the program (most recent year, 2-year average, 5-year average);
 - v. Enrollment in the majors-required sections (most recent year, 2-year average, 5-year average);
 - vi. Enrollment in the majors-elective sections (department-based courses only) (most recent year, 2-year average, 5-year average);
 - vii. Environmental scans and marketing studies indicating level of interests in the program;
 - viii. Comparison of enrollment in similar and/or competitor institutions;
- b. Financial Based Criteria:
 - i. Capital and capital support funds (most recent year, 2-year average, 5-year average);
 - ii. Cost per credit hour generated in the program (most recent year, 2-year average, 5-year average);
 - iii. Excess revenue generated after direct and indirect costs (most recent year, 2-year average, 5-year average);
- c. Quality Based Criteria:
 - i. Qualitative and quantitative information from accrediting associations;
 - ii. Post-graduate destinations of program graduates;
 - iii. Level of standards and quality of outcomes from department-generated program improvement plans;
 - iv. Contribution to University mission;
- d. The criteria identified in this section are established for use in preliminary screening of academic programs for discontinuance. These criteria, and the review mechanism using these criteria, are not to be the sole basis upon which program retirement is determined. These are base criteria and others may be added, if appropriate to the field, after consultation with the Faculty Senate.

C. Review Process

1. The discontinuance-eligible program is identified using procedures and criteria outlined in A and B above and is utilized to produce an initial proposal for discontinuance which is drafted by the faculty, department, Director(s), Dean(s), or Provost. A timeline for the process is stated below along with time limits for each stage of the process. All number of days refer to days within an academic year and does not include summer. If a time limit is not met, then the proposal will move to the next stage of the process unless an extension to the time limit is granted by the Faculty Senate President. Written notification by the Faculty Senate President of this extension to the time limit must be included in the proposal.
2. Regardless of origin, any proposal to discontinue a program goes first to the home Dean(s) of the department(s) with primary responsibility for offering the program. It will be the responsibility of the home Dean(s) to compile all response reports (i.e., initial proposal for discontinuance, Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D) which will ultimately be submitted to the Faculty Senate for review.
3. Within 14 days of receipt of the initial proposal for discontinuance, the home Dean(s):
 - a. Provide a copy of the initial proposal to and consult with the Department Chair(s), Program Director(s), and/or Interdepartmental Program Director(s) if applicable, and faculty of the department(s) with primary responsibility for offering the program and reviews relevant data and criteria with these individuals (i.e., what was proposed as reason to discontinue as outlined in the initial proposal);
 - b. Following consultations outlined in (2.a.), gives notification to the appropriate Dean's Conference(s) that the program will be considered for discontinuance.
4. In department(s) with primary responsibility for offering the program and within 30 days of receipt of the initial proposal for discontinuance from the home Dean(s):
 - a. The Department Chair(s), Program Director(s), Interdepartmental Program Director(s), or designate(s) examines the case and, with the collaboration of department faculty, prepares a response to the initial proposal. In the case of an interdepartmental program, departments will meet jointly to discuss the case and prepare a joint departmental response. This response will be included as Appendix A to the initial proposal of discontinuance. The Department Chair(s), Program Director(s), and/or Interdepartmental Program Director(s), submits the response report to the relevant Dean(s). The report will include a

departmental position on the discontinuance-eligible program along with the basis of the position. A minority report, where applicable, will be included in the response. The minority report will be included as Appendix B to the initial proposal of discontinuance. The departmental report may include, but is not limited to:

- i. History and expectations from the program;
 - ii. Demand for the program;
 - iii. Quality of the program;
 - iv. Quality and value of program goals and outcomes;
 - v. Impact, justification and essentiality of the program;
 - vi. SWOT analysis focusing on opportunities for the program.
5. Within 30 days of receiving both the majority and minority reports from the department(s), the relevant Dean(s) will:
 - a. Prepare a summary report and response to the Provost and provide a copy to the Department Chair(s), Program Director(s) and/or Interdepartmental Program Director(s). This summary report and response will be included as Appendix C. In the case of a cross-college interdisciplinary program, the Deans will file a joint report to the Provost;
 - b. Distribute copies of the initial proposal with Appendices A, B, and C to their Dean's Conference and the Provost.
 6. Within 30 days of receiving the initial proposal with Appendices A, B, and C by the home Dean(s), the Provost will consult the Deans with respect to the initial proposal, department response, and the summary report and response from the home Dean(s). The Provost will present the case, along with relevant commentary, to the Provost Committee on Academic Policy and Compliance (PCAPC) for their recommendation and rationale. The Provost will send this recommendation and rationale, along with any commentary, to the home Dean(s) to be included as Appendix D to the initial proposal.
 7. Within 14 days of receiving Appendix D from the Provost/PCAPC, a home Dean(s) submits the Discontinuance of an Academic Program Form along with the initial proposal for discontinuance, Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C, and Appendix D to the Faculty Senate through posting a single document on the Faculty Senate Curriculum Bulletin Board.
 8. The Faculty Senate's Curriculum Committee will design and maintain the review process for the Faculty Senate and the full Senate will have 30 days to consider the proposal and make its recommendations.

9. The Faculty Senate communicates its recommendations to the Chair(s), Program Director(s), and/or Interdepartmental Program Director(s), the Dean(s), and the Provost.
10. The Provost communicates their decision to the Faculty Senate, Department Chair(s), Program Director(s), and/or Interdepartmental Program Director(s), and the Dean(s).
11. In the case of a major degree program, the Provost seeks approval for discontinuance from the Board of Trustees and notifies the Faculty Senate, Department Chair(s), Program Director(s), and/or Interdepartmental Program Director(s), and Dean(s) of the Board's decision.
12. If a decision is made to discontinue an academic program, then a protocol for phasing-out the program must be developed, including addressing any conditions of the Faculty Collective Bargaining agreement and any program teach out requirements, as appropriate. Note, parts of this plan may be requested by the Faculty Senate throughout the process outlined above.
 - a. An action plan for phasing out the program is designed by the department(s) in consultation with the Dean(s) and the Office of the General Counsel. The plan includes a timeline of steps and actions, including sites of responsibility. (These sites will include the Offices of Marketing and Communications, Admissions, relevant Dean(s), Provost, Advising Centers, Accreditation, Registrar and Financial Aid, relevant community-based sites of cooperation, etc.).
 - b. The action plan must include a teach out plan, if applicable, that provides a reasonable opportunity and timeline for students who are active in the program to complete the degree requirements. The plan should also identify exactly to whom the teach out plan does and does not apply and the date by which the teach out must be completed.
 - c. Students considered to be active in the program receive certified personal letters with information regarding the teach out process, instructions on how to respond to the situation and where to go with questions.
 - d. The Dean(s) will review the final draft and recommend action to the Provost. The Provost in turn, may ask for changes or authorize appropriate action.

VI. Related Policies/Documents

- [University of Scranton Faculty Handbook](#)

- [University Guide to Governance](#) and institutional policy process/flowchart.